Letter No. 6. Thursday - 9 April

Major J. H. Massey -
6, Palestinian Coy - The Ruffs
M. E. F.

My sweetest darling -

I wrote & posted A.F. no 33 today, in which I gave you such latest news as there is about comparriage's posting; I also told you in fairly plain language, how very much I love you & how painfully I miss you. And so I look a bit flat for beginning another letter. There is, of course, very much about which I can write - & the choice lies, as usually does, between my trivial bits of news about my doings - serious matters of politics & what is going to happen to England after the war - & expression about my love for you & thoughts about you & Maxie. It is indeed fortunate that you do enjoy my sayings & doings & so on, because you say you do, my darling. Though I am continually afraid that since I last had your assurances on the subject, I may have gone off, or you may have become suddenly, or even gradually, bored. So please continue to reassure me - or else tell me, quickly, & by p.c., how I am going wrong.

Anyway, firstly, I will tell you my bits of news. Last night I went to Tel Aviv & saw the film "Lady Hamilton". Have you seen it? - I found it very good indeed, & Laurence Olivier & Vivien Leigh acting very inspiring. It certainly had good propaganda effect on me, as regards doing my duty in case of opposition & officialdom; & it also gave me a warm & rather sobby feeling about - perfect love -.

On Tuesday night I worked late, & then went to bed early - this being after Monday, about which I will now tell you.

Monday was the day of the rearming march. I

promised you in my last letter that I would try & make you laugh when I told you about it. It was amusing in parts, & as I have not very much other news, I will tell you all about it - & see what I can make of it.

I was in command & we were due to move off at 10-45 - & we moved off on the dot (amazing, for a T.A. officer?) A large police band led - followed by me - followed by Ben, & then my C.S.M. - then No 6 Coy - & then the A.T.S. - then various units. The march was without incident - the streets were well lined & they all cheered & clapped & threw flowers. We marched past the Area Commander - the District Commissioner, who looked rather silly in morning clothes, & raising his top hat in return to my salute. We then marched into a place called Sir Herbert Samuel Square, down by the sea, formed up in order to listen to speeches - & where I had to rather make an exhibition of myself by having the parade to attention & clapping their arms for the anthems, by giving a present arms to the Area Commander. The troops then went off for lunch - & the officers went to be entertained to lunch by the Jewish Agency. Dudley played a pretty low & Machiavellian trick on me by putting me in between the District Commissioner's wife, & a Senior Commander (equal to major) Pine, who is in charge of the A.T.S. Training Depot. Mrs D.C. was a silly, ordinary, snobbish, rather impossible, but harmless & well-meaning little woman. But it was simple to see in her, in a lesser degree, the failure, which is now coming home to roost, of Colonial administrators. S. Cmd Pine seemed pretty grim - about 35 - a mannish woman type, & very much the efficient woman. But she is

war a Red soul — I will tell you more about her later.
After lunch — there was a concert for the troops by the Palestine Orchestra, to which I went, they played lighter music, which they seem to enjoy playing very much, which was lovely. They played the Blue Danube beautifully — I also remember the Orpheus overture by Offenbach — especially the second movement, I think it was, which has a haunting melody — a certain note, which gave me a very pleasant feeling.
Ben — I then came back here, but the day was not over, because the Royal Engineer officers were giving a party for the A.T.S. officers — to which I was bidden took Ben along too. This was quite a good booze show, there was dancing too, ~~there was dancing too~~ — but I escaped this, except to dance once with a young English A.T.S. with a strong moustache. I spent most of the evening having rather deep & intense conversations with young English girls, who had only been in the M.E. for 5 days, informing them about the problems here, how to deal with them. It is rather a strange feeling, talking to reasonably good looking young women, of one's own class (horrible expression) — having them calling you "Sir".
I then had an even deeper & still more intense one with one of the new Jewish A.T.S. officers — but she was a Russian very interesting intelligent, so the conversation was not so one sided.
It was now 1.0 am. Then I got a lift home from a rather drunken young R.E. 2/Lt — & S. and Pine & a rather Wasp R.E. friend came too. She had

been drinking hard all night & had been doing a great deal of dancing with & talking to Ben, who was making a brave effort to convert her to a more independent outlook on Palestine, & to wean her away from official & regular army clutches. Arrived at my flat we had more large whiskies & unleavened bread & cold Kosher sausages (it has just been Passover) & talked on until 3.0 am. Now I think Ben's task & mine are hopeless - she is quite a decent woman, but in love, well under the thumb of the Chief woman, about whom I told you in a previous letter. Now it is worth the attempt - if 10,000 women pass through her hands in the next few months, she can be an influence in one way or the other.

Darling Barbara, it is probably silly of me to say so & forgive me please, if you think so too. But the arrival & general loveliness of these A.T.S. girls cannot possibly & will never make any difference to my complete & absolute faithfulness to you. You did say, you know, after you heard about the Hopkins - "is she pretty, & have you fallen for her!" And so that is why I tell you this, my darling. From time to time, there is a bad side of my conscience which whispers to me that perhaps I might just kiss this or that girl. But I do assure you that my love for you never wavers for one single moment & there is not even a small struggle.

Oh believe me, sweet darling heart, I love you only & with all my mind & body & soul. I am looking at your photographs now, & your

sweet, beautiful face which I love so much. I am glad you enjoyed & happy that news yr have I done any single wonderful thing about which you could not & should not know. And as I look, I am more certain than ever that I never shall.

But darling, I do long for you - hopelessly, endlessly, really unbearably. But I have to bear it - we both have to - until that wonderful day comes. Oh what a wonderful day it will be - & all the years after it. Goodnight XXXH.

Friday - After 10th. At 3 weeks silence was broken today thank God - I had a letter & a pc from you. Darling, are you getting a little idea about writing to me? Because your pc was March 19th - the one before was Feb 26th & your letter was full of all the enclosures about I.I. etc & was posted on Feb 19th - the one before was Feb 3rd. Perhaps something has been delayed or gone missing - but do please send me a letter once a week, darling, even if it is only a short one. I do so love your letters, long & look forward for them - & even feel a little bit offended if I think you have gone a whole fortnight without writing to me. I gave you a slight taste once before, do you remember? - & which you hotly denied. But I was right: no 59 posted on 7 Sept & then no 60 posted on 19 Sept. Though, I must admit that you wrote in Sept, on the 1, 4, 7, 19, 22, & 29.

Your pc reported receiving 5 of my letters in one week - what can I do about it? I think I will write to "Gen" which is a used R.A.F. magazine out here. They have been going since February.

published some fairly outspoken letters - a number of which have complained about the letter from home to the M.S. None have complained about the reverse procedure. So I think I will.

I was so glad to see from your p.c. that you do not look upon your move to Cambridge as a permanent arrangement, but only as an expedient, that you may move on to Caernarvon. I had another letter from Vera today, saying how much she was looking forward to hearing from you again, that you would go & stay up there - "what a darling you were" & how she wished like to have you near.

The Income Tax is an absolute bugger - I quite agree! I'm afraid I cannot make any helpful remarks or suggestions; I am so out of touch - short of information. But I will send on R.J. to Gordon saying our the position, which may help. But do not worry, sweetheart - we must pay on what we earn. And we are both spending the minimum. My last £20 was drawn on Jan 19th - I think I wrote told you that it would last until May - I am now quite sure that it will last until July. But, the present rates of I.T. are quite right you know. Even if I have to become a Lt-Col, most of the increase in pay would be absorbed in tax. Starting from our pre-war overdraft, until today, we have put by £4-500. Marie is each year - growing up. So our position is wonderfully improved, in spite of the war - so please darling, do not

worry - do not be too downy with yourself.
Your letter to the Ottoman Bank about Passah was very good, & it is quite evident that you can deal out a good knock too. They have reinstated the allowance now, but in a very ungracious way. I promptly wrote & thanked them, rather acidly, & asked them to say that Passahi's pay was allowed, for after the war. My letter was dated Feb 5th (my birthday) & they replied on 18 May as follows: "I am unable to give an answer to the question contained in the penultimate paragraph of your letter. I am referring the matter to my London Office." Makes you sick, doesn't it? The man in London is said to be their Palestine manager & not an office boy, seems to have been without foundation. Any way - I think the correct answer would have been that he had better watch his step, or else he will not even be there after the war, when the Banks are nationalised. The bloody shits - how I hate them.

Saturday morning - I must polish this off & post it in a few minutes. I am going off with Ben at 12.0 o'clock & we are spending the week end going round some of the settlements in northern Palestine & down by the Sea of Galilee - the main purpose being to find recruits for the Corps. I hope we shall get some - but in any case, we should have an interesting time & I shall see some more

of the country.

I am packing up sending off by sea mail, this morning, some more photographs of, taken by the same man as before. There are poses - & you will decide whether you like them or not. And the other two are taken in my room & you can now see roughly, what it is like. The one one of me writing is amazing for detail - the photos of you & Lisa are almost as good as the originals. The man is making me some smaller ones, which I will send on by air mail. You will be getting fed up with my face, darling. I wish you would send me as many as I send you - I want some more of you so much. And especially some pretty, sexy ones, sweetheart, which you did say you thought was very right & proper, & which you promised to do for me. Please make an effort, my darling. My imagination is very good, & I think about you very passionately, as I am sure you would want me. But some pictures would be lovely to have.

Love to Maria, please darling, & a big kiss & a big hug. And all the love to you, my beautiful sweetheart wife & many many long passionate kisses. Your own loving & adoring husband - Harry.

Mrs Barbara Massey
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~~c/o Mrs Paul~~
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